



NEWS RELEASE

FROM: John D. Phillips

District Attorney of San Joaquin County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ON JANUARY 30, 2003

**ONE OF CALIFORNIA'S LARGEST GREASE HAULING BUSINESSES
ACCUSED OF POLLUTION AND ILLEGAL BUSINESS PRACTICES**

A civil enforcement action charging a large Fresno-based grease hauling business with violations of water pollution laws was filed today in Stockton, San Joaquin County District Attorney John D. Phillips announced. The case is based on the work of a statewide taskforce created by the California Environmental Protection Agency to focus enforcement efforts on the illegal disposal of waste grease in California. The complaint was filed in San Joaquin County with the action joined by eleven counties throughout California including Kings, Madera, Merced, Monterey, Sacramento, San Bernardino, Shasta, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, and Tehama Counties.

The complaint alleges that Thrifty Best Service, a company operated by Central California Wastepaper Incorporated, violated provisions of the State Water Code and Fish and Game Code, created a public nuisance and engaged in unfair business practices including false advertising, by illegally dumping inedible kitchen grease into public sewers and storm drains. Thrifty Best Service faces penalties under the complaint in excess of \$3 Million. Prosecutors will also be seeking a court order preventing Thrifty Best Service from illegally disposing of grease waste while the action is pending.

The illegal disposal of restaurant grease is a significant statewide problem causing damage to publicly owned sewage treatment facilities, expensive sewer back-ups and damage to the environment including water pollution. Businesses contracting with Thrifty Best for waste grease services expect the company to properly dispose of the waste through sewage treatment plants, rendering plants or recycling facilities and were likely unaware of the alleged unlawful disposals. The complaint alleges that Thrifty Best Service employees have violated the law in at least seven incidents occurring in seven different locations ranging from Redding to Rancho Cucamonga.

Thrifty Best Service was recently convicted of water pollution-related crimes in Santa Clara County and was ordered to pay over \$34,000 in fines and costs. In the same case, one of Thrifty Best Service's drivers was convicted of a felony and was sentenced to up to 90 days in jail and must pay a \$13,500 fine. A felony complaint was also recently filed against Thrifty

Best Service and another of its drivers in Sonoma County. The case is pending at this time.

The District Attorneys joining in today's filing include:

RONALD L. CALHOUN
District Attorney of Kings County

ERNEST J. LICALSI
District Attorney of Madera County

GORDON SPENCER
District Attorney of Merced County

DEAN FLIPPO
District Attorney of Monterey County

JAN SCULLY
District Attorney of Sacramento County

MICHAEL RAMOS
District Attorney of San Bernardino County

JOHN D. PHILLIPS
District Attorney of San Joaquin County

McGREGOR SCOTT
District Attorney of Shasta County

DAVID W. PAULSON
District Attorney of Solano County

STEPHAN PASSALACQUA
District Attorney of Sonoma County

JAMES C. BRAZELTON
District Attorney of Stanislaus County

GREG COHEN
District Attorney of Tehama County

CONTACT PERSON: David J. Irey, Lead Deputy District Attorney, Environmental Prosecutions Unit, Phone (209) 468-2470, Pager (209) 983-7637.

Unfortunately, on Thursday, January 30, 2003, Mr. Irey will only be able to return calls between 12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. and after 3:30 p.m. due to his schedule. However, listed in the civil complaint on pages 2 and 3 are other prosecutors in this case who will be able to help you with any questions you may have regarding this matter.